



# Most common reasons for shipping delays and what they mean

Questions? Call 1300 183 910  
or email [sales@two-australia.com](mailto:sales@two-australia.com)

## Scarcity of containers

This is quite unique to 'COVID times' and is the result of an increase in demand for consumer products out of China and the severe disruption in the cycling of containers around global ports. In other words, the steady and predictable flow of international sea freight requires a regular cycle of containers arriving at a port, being emptied and then reused for export. When this cycle is disrupted, as it has been through COVID it takes a long time to recalibrate. This issue is then only exacerbated by the further challenges noted below.

## Overbooking of ships and containers being 'rolled'

Increases in demand for consumer products out of China have led to shipping companies overbooking vessels. As a result containers that are booked on a particular vessel can be 'rolled' to a later vessel. This would be similar to arriving at the airport with a plane ticket and being told that the aircraft is full and that you need to wait for the next available flight.

## Delays at Chinese ports due to congestion and port closures

This can be due to the following:

- COVID outbreaks at Chinese ports. This has recently been experienced at the Ningbo port and had a flow on effect at the Shanghai port as vessels were redirected causing congestion
- Inclement weather such as the current typhoon. This can result in port warehouses, container yards and terminals being closed.
- International tensions and Naval activity in the South China Sea. Such Naval activity can impact the free flow of container vessels through the passage between mainland China and the west coast of Taiwan.

## Lack of drivers for local trucks in China

Due to increased demand for consumer goods together with a changing labour pool there has been a lack of truck drivers in China which can delay the delivery of empty containers to and pick up of full containers from the factory

## Industrial action in Australia

'Go slows' and 'strikes' at Australian ports will always have an impact on the speed at which containers can be unloaded from vessels and delivered to our warehouses. We have recently seen the impact of such action at both the Sydney and Melbourne ports

## Vessels breaking down

The impact of this is self evident however the more significant issue is that if a vessel breaks down there are both operational and financial decisions that are made by the shipping companies in relation to whether containers on that vessel are removed and placed on another vessel, transferred to road or rail alternatives or left on the vessel until the issue is repaired. Unfortunately these decisions are traditionally made in the best financial interest of the shipping companies not the desire of the end consumer to receive their goods as soon as possible.

## Changes to shipping schedules

Due to the disruptions noted above, shipping companies can at times change the arrival schedule for vessels in an effort to minimise the financial impact of such delays or manage the impact of missed arrival bookings at destination ports. For example, a ship carrying a combination of containers destined for Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane may be redirected to travel first to Melbourne and then continue north to Sydney and Brisbane when the original schedule had that vessel first arriving at Brisbane and traveling south.